	Mount Rainier National Park
	Sister Mountain Project

Enviro-Ethics

Overview	Children are naturally curious about the environment. They should be encouraged to explore the world around them without causing any damage due to the choices they make in their daily lives. In this activity students will develop a "Personal Code of Environmental Ethics "for exploring and enjoying the natural world and reducing their ecological footprint.
Grade Level	5-8
Objectives	• Students will distinguish between actions that are harmful and beneficial to the environment. • Students will evaluate the appropriateness and feasibility of making changes in their own behaviors related to the environment.
Setting	Indoors or Outdoors
Time Frame	Activity-one or two 30-45 minute sessions
Materials	✓ Writing paper ✓ Pencils ✓ White boards ✓ Markers ✓ Books or artifacts from famous environmentalists
Vocabulary	Ethics, lifestyle, responsibility
Standards	6-8 INQA —Question—Scientific *inquiry* involves asking and answering *questions* and comparing the answer with what scientists already know about the world. 6-8 INQG —Communicate Clearly—Scientific reports should enable another investigator to repeat the study to check the results. 6-8 INQH —Intellectual Honestly—*Science* advances through openness to new *ideas*, honesty, and legitimate *skepticism*. Asking thoughtful *questions*, querying other scientists' explanations, and evaluating one's own thinking in response to the *ideas* of others are abilities of scientific *inquiry*. 6-8 INQH —Intellectual Honestly—*Science* advances through openness to new *ideas*,

	honesty, and legitimate _skepticism_. Asking thoughtful _questions_, querying other scientists' explanations, and evaluating one's own thinking in response to the _ideas_ of others are abilities of scientific _inquiry_. 6-8 INQI —_Consider_ Ethics—Scientists and engineers have ethical codes governing animal _experiments_, research in natural _ecosystems_, and studies that involve human subjects. 6-8 APPG The benefits of science and technology are not available to all the people in the world. 6-8 APPH People in all _cultures_ have made and continue to make contributions to society through _science_ and _technology_. 6-8 LS2E _Investigations_ of _environmental_ issues should uncover _factors_ causing the problem and relevant scientific _concepts_ and findings that may inform an _analysis_ of different ways to address the issue.
Background	Ethics are derived from our guiding moral principles. They are influenced by age, gender, culture, family and religion. Between the ages of 10 and 18, many people go through profound moral growth. During that time, they typically not only develop the mental reasoning abilities to grapple with moral issues, but also find themselves in more and more situations in which they have to make their own decisions. Ethics extend into many areas, including how people treat wildlife, contribute to climate change and impact the rest of the environment. As students become more informed about wildlife, climate change and topics associated with the environment, as well as with the range of viewpoints surrounding them, they may experience shifts in their environmental ethics. Superficial understanding probably will lead to superficial ethical decisions. Having accurate information about wildlife and human effects on the environment will tend to help students reach more responsible decisions concerning wildlife, climate change and the environment upon which all life depends. Class discussions related to ethics need to be designed to respect the student's right to privacy and nonparticipation. Educators could review and follow any policies related to teaching about ethics. Many educators have incorporated environmental ethics into drug prevention and other health programs. Developing ethical standards in one area can serve as a bridge to developing them in others. The purpose of this activity is to provide students with the encouragement and opportunity to examine personal lifestyles in light of their effects on wildlife, climate

	change, and the environment. This activity is a great follow-up to *Cascading Effects* and a great lead-in to *Improving Your Place*.
Procedure	1. Involve the students in discussion about the effects each of us has on the environment–from using electricity to make breakfast, to wearing clothes derived from natural resources and transported using fossil fuels, to use of the varied products we choose and use each day, to our choices of recreation, transportation, and entertainment. 2. Have each student identify someone who has done something that benefited wildlife and the environment. It could be someone famous like Theodore Roosevelt, Rachel Carson, John Muir, Al Gore, the Crocodile Hunter or Leonardo DiCaprio or someone relatively unknown. Ask about the beliefs or values that person holds (or held) about the environment. 3. Next, ask each student to identify something they have done to help wildlife and the environment that they did not have to do. Ask why they chose to perform that task voluntarily. Talk about what "ethic or "ethical standard" guided their decision. Explain that complex issues, like most wildlife and other environmental issues contain a wide range of valid ethical positions. 4. Have the students brainstorm a list of the daily effects each of us has on the environment. This discussion can include our use of water, electricity, and fossil fuels; the effects caused by the production and manufacture of our food and clothing; and the environmental consequences of our recreation and entertainment choices. 5. Discuss how all living things affect the environment. Ask how some human environmental impacts are different from the impacts caused by other living things. Discuss how ethics can influence human effects on wildlife and the environment. Ask how a personal code of environmental ethics might have guided the people who did something for wildlife and the environment. Now ask the students how they think a personal code of environmental ethics might guide them as they make decisions about the daily effects they just listed. 6. Ask each student to work alone to devise a "Personal Code of Environmental Ethics." This code may be written or not. Emphasize the importance of the code being for the person who creates it. The code may consider daily actions that are harmful to the environment and those that are beneficial. The students could consciously create their code on the basis of actions they believe are beneficial, or at least not harmful, to the environment. 7. Ask for volunteers to share their "Personal Code of Environmental Ethics." They may share the entire code or a segment of it. They should describe the thinking that went into the decisions they made in constructing their code. Students might illustrate a part of their code–if they chose not to write it–to convey a major idea. Encourage the students to ask each other questions about the codes–in the spirit of learning more about each person's priorities, but not in a judgmental way. The purpose is for each student to evaluate his or her own priorities in a responsible consideration of day-to-day actions that

	affect the environment without being actively critical of another student's approach to the same problem. In this way, each student is encouraged to take responsibility for his or her own actions.
	8. Encourage the students to try using their codes, keeping track of how easy or difficult it is for them to live by them. "Progress reports" are appropriate, again in the spirit of each person paying attention to his or her own actions and bearing responsibility for them.
	9. Have students develop a "life map." It could include where you want to live; whether you want a family; what kind of home, transportation, food sources, job, or recreation you want; and so forth. Look at the costs and benefits of your choices–for you personally, other people in your community, wildlife, natural resources, and such.
Suggested Assessment	• Develop a list of 5-10 environmental issues. • Develop a list of ways that you directly or indirectly contribute to an environmental problem (climate change, pollution, etc.) • Identify, describe, and evaluate one way you could lessen your role in contributing to an environmental problem. • What changes can you make in your lifestyle that will reduce your role in contributing to an environmental problem? • Present "life map" to class.
Adaptations	Have students act out one of their favorite environmentalists from the selected books and artifacts and role play one of their struggles to protect the environment.
Extensions	Complete activities: *Improving Your Place* and/or *Citizen Science* Have students watch and write a report on the podcast The Story of Stuff: www.thestoryofstuff.com
References/ Resources	*Project WILD: K-12 Curriculum & Activity Guide*. Houston, TX: Project WILD National Office, 2008. Print